

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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FOLLOWING DEMOCRATIC PRESSURE ON BUSH, LOW INCOME HEATING AID FINALLY RENEWED

Markey lauds HHS for release of much needed home heating assistance for elderly, poor

Washington, D.C. – Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, announced the release of more federal money for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). On December 20, 2002, a bipartisan group of 81 lawmakers, including Rep. Markey, sent a letter to the President urging him to release contingency LIHEAP funds, to support \$1.7 billion in regular LIHEAP funding for Fiscal Year 2003, and to provide at least \$1.7 billion in funding in the Fiscal Year 2004 budget. Yesterday, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced second quarter allocations that in effect provide funding above the \$1.4 billion allocated in the current continuing resolution.

“The Department of Health and Human Services recognized that this is a difficult winter for many Americans. Early snows combined with rising unemployment and rising fuel prices have left many low-income, elderly and disabled households in desperate need of fuel assistance,” said Rep. Markey.

HHS announced grants of \$545 million to states for the second quarter of the fiscal year for the LIHEAP program. The grants bring the total amount given to states under LIHEAP for this fiscal year to \$1.38 billion. Massachusetts received \$40.1 million in LIHEAP funds in the second quarter allocation and have received \$63.1 million in the fiscal year to date.

“Yesterday’s announcement of LIHEAP funding levels is a step in the right direction, but the President could still do more to provide heating assistance to American facing a difficult winter. \$300 million in contingency funds exist that he could release as a further help to struggling households. The President should also express a willingness to release oil from the Northeast Home Heating Oil Reserve to stabilize the increasing cost of heating oil. No family should be forced to choose between heating and eating,” concluded Rep. Markey.

According to the Energy Information Agency, heating oil price increased from 69 to 90 cents per gallon from November 11 to December 27.

All correspondence may be found on Rep. Markey’s website at www.house.gov/markey.

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